

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

TRSE-00 /059 W  
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R 161616Z JUL 76  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3739  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMCONSUL BELFAST  
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, UK  
SUBJ: LABOR CANDIDATE WINS THURROCK BY-ELECTION  
REF: LONDON 9945

SUMMARY: IN BY-ELECTION IN THURROCK JULY 15, LABOR CANDI-  
DATE WON WITH CONSIDERABLY REDUCED MAJORITY, LOW VOTER  
TURN OUT, LOSS OF DEPOSITS FOR NATIONAL FRONT, LIBERALS,  
AND FRINGE PARTIES. CONSERVATIVES ARE PLEASED WITH  
REPETITION OF ROTHERHAM PATTERN, EVEN THOUGH "SWING"  
TO CONSERVATIVES FELL FROM 14.3 PERCENT IN ROTHERHAM TO  
10.7 PERCENT IN THURROCK. VICTORIOUS LABOR CANDIDATE,  
DR. OONAGH MCDONALD, WILL LIKELY BE INTRODUCED IN PARLIA-  
MENT JULY 19 TO BOOST LABOR VOTES IN NEXT WEEK'S CRITICAL  
DEBATES. REPORTEDLY DR. MCDONALD WILL ALLY HERSELF WITH  
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TRIBUNE GROUP. END SUMMARY.

2. UNIVERSITY PHILOSOPHY LECTURER, DR. OONAGH MCDONALD RETAINED THE LABOR SEAT IN THURROCK BY-ELECTION JULY 15, REPLACING HUGH I. DELARGY WHO DIED IN MAY. DR. MCDONALD, WHO WAS ADOPTED AS CANDIDATE ONLY SHORTLY BEFORE THE BY-ELECTION WAS ANNOUNCED (AND TO WHOM CONSTITUENCY PARTY REPORTEDLY OBJECTED STRONGLY DESPITE SUPPORT GIVEN HER BY TRANSPORT HOUSE), WILL TAKE HER SEAT IN COMMONS JULY 19. THIS WILL INCREASE LABOR'S EFFECTIVE VOTING STRENGTH IN THE HOUSE FOR THE VOTES ON CRITICAL LEGISLATION NEXT WEEK (SEE SEPTTEL). DR. MCDONALD IS REPORTEDLY A SUPPORTER OF BENN AND WILL LIKELY ALLY HERSELF WITH THE TRIBUNE GROUP.

3. THE BY -ELECTION IN THURROCK CLOSELY PARALLELS THAT IN ROTHERHAM (REFTTEL). VOTER TURN OUT WAS LOW (54.15 PERCENT IN THURROCK), THE LIBERALS AGAIN LOST THEIR DEPOSIT, THE "SWING" TO CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT WAS IMPRESSIVE (10.7 PERCENT IN THURROCK AND 14.3 PERCENT IN ROTHERHAM). IN SPITE OF LOWER VOTER PARTICIPATION, THE CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE INCREASED TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES FROM 14,986 (OCTOBER 1974) TO 17,352. LABOR VOTE DROPPED FROM 34,066 TO 22,191.

4. THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE MANAGED TO HOLD LESS THAN HALF OF THE VOTES HE RECEIVED IN OCTOBER 1974, SHOWING THE CONTINUING DECLINE IN THE FORTUNES OF THE PARTY. HE LOST HIS DEPOSIT SINCE HE DID NOT RECEIVE 12.5 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE.

5. THE NATIONAL FRONT DID BETTER THAN WAS HOPED, DRAWING OVER 3000 VOTES IN A CONSTITUENCY WHICH HAS FEW IMMIGRANTS AND WHICH, SO FAR, HAS NOT BEEN PLAGUED BY RACIAL TENSIONS. HE LOST HIS DEPOSIT TOO, AS DID TWO OTHER CANDIDATES OF MINOR PARTIES.

6. COMMENT: A LABOR DEFEAT IN THURROCK WOULD HAVE WIPED OUT LABOR'S OVERALL MAJORITY IN THE HOUSE AND COMPLICATED PROSPECTS FOR PASSING CRITICAL LEGISLATION IN THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM NEXT WEEK. A LABOR VICTORY  
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EASES THE PICTURE SOMEWHAT, BUT DOES NOT REMOVE ALL THE PRESSURE, GIVEN ILLNESSES ON THE GOVERNMENT'S SIDE, TRAVELLING GOVERNMENT MINISTERS. AND THE RENEWED BREAK IN PAIRING ARRANGEMENTS. LABOR VICTORY IN THURROCK REINFORCES THE GOVERNMENT'S REPRESENTATION ON PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES ANOTHER ISSUE WHICH HAS ACERBATED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE GOVERNMENT.

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## Message Attributes

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